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Play is FUNdamental: Play and Reading are Connected - Really!

Lisa R. Audet, PhD, CCC-SLP

Moderated by:
Amy Natho, MS, CCC-SLP, CEU Administrator, SpeechPathology.com

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Play is FUNdamental: Play and Reading are Connected - Really!

Lisa R. Audet, PhD, CCC-SLP

Kent State University

laudet@kent.edu



Lisa Audet Bio

- Dr. Lisa Audet has been a practicing SLP for 35 years. She has been on faculty in Speech Pathology & Audiology at Kent State University since 2000. She specializes in early childhood language development and disorders, low incidence disorders, autism, augmentative communication, and assistive technology. Dr. Audet has published and presented at the national and international level.



- Presenter Disclosure: Financial: Lisa Audet received an honorarium for this presentation. She directs the Autism Initiative for Research Education and Outreach at Kent State University and owns a private SLP practice. Nonfinancial: No relevant relationships to disclose.
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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Define the different stages of story grammar development.
- Describe how story grammar development is correlated with stages of language/cognitive play development.
- List strategies for integrating play and story development into intervention, regardless of therapy targets.



Agenda

Introduction

Stages of Story Grammar

Story Grammar as Correlated to Play & Language

Strategies to Support Play, Language and Story Grammar

Questions

A little story.....

- Jackson is an adorable 9 year old. He has been diagnosed with ASD-1. He is in a general education 4th grade class. Jackson loves his train collection. It includes various model trains, books and posters. Adults marvel about how much Jackson knows about trains.
- In conversation Jackson sounds like a museum curator. If a child or adult interrupts his monolog about trains, Jackson will forcefully say: "I'm not done yet!"
- Children and adults have begun to avoid Jackson. Some peers set him up to start talking about trains in situations when they know he will need to stop, and he will become upset when the limit to stop talking is imposed.
- Jackson's reading comprehension for science and social studies is at a 6th grade level. His general reading comprehension ability however is at a 2nd grade level.
- Teachers say the discrepancy has to do with his preferred interest and lack of interest in the content of stories.
- Analysis of the differences between story grammar types reveals something quite different.
- His history of play supports the existence of this difference too. Jackson was a lego builder and model maker. He preferred solitary play throughout preschool and kindergarten.



Story Grammar: Review

- Story Grammar is:
 - a developmental process
 - An internal schema for how a story is organized
 - Related to play, literacy & discourse
- Listening Comprehension for stories is typically 2 grade levels above reading comprehension
- The more time children spend in pretend play in kindergarten, the better their reading comprehension in 3rd grade
 - Why?
 - In pretend play, children develop story schema. They then approach the reading or story listening task by applying the schema to the story: thus aiding in comprehension
- Story schema is associated with discourse skills. Individuals use story grammar as an organizational structure for sharing past, present, future events in discourse



Types of Tasks and Stories

- Story Tasks
 - Listening Comprehension
 - Story Retell
 - Story Construction (oral or written)
 - Discourse

Complexity: Story level, plot/theme, vocabulary, syntactic

- Types:
 - Narratives: Characters, setting, relationships between characters, problems and resolution; emotional response to characters, problems, resolutions (theme, plot, initiating event, attempts)
 - Expository: The facts organized in a particular fashion



Story Grammar, Play, Literacy, and Discourse Problems in Children with DD

- Delays in play align with
 - delays in representational thought (symbolic thought)
 - delays in sequential thought
 - Receptive and expressive language development
- As a result, understanding story structure is delayed as is comprehension of “wh” questions
- Additionally, language and auditory processing problems may be present along with long term and working memory difficulties
- Some individuals possess a gestalt learning style and demonstrate strengths in construction type play
- Construction play doesn’t involve story grammar development, it aligns with expository text
- Children with autism may adopt an expository text format within their discourse



Story Grammar Development

- Applebee Stages (1978)
- Description
- Example of Children's Books
- Example of Children's Oral Expression



Heaps

- A pre-narrative structure where children talk about whatever attracts their attention. There is no relationship, sequence, or organization between elements.
- Children's Books: Object labels, first words
- Oral Expression: Naming objects and actions: Doggie, Chair, Ball



Sequence

- Has a macrostructure involving a central character, setting, or topic related through concrete associations.
- Children's Books: Good Night Moon, (Margaret Wise Brown, 1947) a little bunny, a bedroom and topic (saying good night)
- Oral Expression: Child introduces a location and names everything in that location or all the people present. "I go to Nanna's and I eat a banana and a cracker and some ice cream and play with a ball and a...."



Primitive Narrative

- Characters, settings, topics are present, and a relationship exists between the elements that follow logically and may be inferred. Story doesn't have a real resolution or ending.
- Children's Book: Clifford Books (Norman Bridwell)
- Oral Expression: Child reports on participation in an event and the aspects of the event. However, the aspects are not related. No evidence of cohesive devices (so, when, while, because). I hurt my arm. See my arm. I go to hospital. Doctor take me to dark room.



Unfocused Chain

- Individual elements (character, setting, and initiating event) are linked together in logical/cause-effect sequences. Character motivation is stated. Cohesive devices are used to represent causality and time. When the central character or topic shifts, theme and plot are absent, and the story chain is UnFocused.
- Oral Expression: We went to Yosemite. We stayed in a hotel. In room 343. We went outside for a hike. On the hike we saw a moose. I was scared. Jacob I am sorry I was at Yosemite for your birthday. I couldn't go to your party because I was away. My mom said stay away from the moose. We kept walking to the lake.



Focused Chain

- Characters, and sequencing are present however individual attributes assigned to characters (e.g.: he was an angry man; so he yelled at all the children), plots are weak at this level. Characters actions seldom lead to attainment of goals. Consequently, there may not be an ending or there will be an ending that is unrelated to the problem.
- Children's Books: If You Give a Mouse a Cookie (Laura Numeroff, 1985)
- Oral Expression: Intention and then, and then, and then. My sister wanted a Barbie for her birthday. My mom said she had too many Barbies. My sister was sad. My mom looked online for Barbies. She did not want to pay a lot of money. Mom went to Walmart too. My mom was tired but then she went to Target. She told my sister she would go to a flea market to get a Barbie. That night we went to Dairy Queen for ice cream.



True Narrative

- Typically age 5-6 years. Integrates sequence with causality, focused on attainment of goal and character development. Story contains cohesion and pronoun referencing.
- Children's Books: Junie B Jones (Barbara Park, 1992-2013)
- Oral Expression: Organized, sequential, rich lexicon, morphology, and syntax. Once there was a skunk in my yard. My dog was going crazy and wanted to go outside to get the skunk. My dad said, "Don't let that dog out. The skunk will spray him, and he will stink." My little sister wanted to let the dog out because he was barking so much. My mom told my sister to come and play. My sister went upstairs. In a little bit the skunk went away. Dad and I took my dog for a walk cuz the dog had to pee.



Play and Story Grammar

Story Grammar Stage	Play Behavior
Heaps	Functional object use. Short attention to the activity.
Sequence	Cause-effect, construction and single step pretend play. Solitary or parallel play. Child goes from one activity to the next.
Primitive Narrative	Pretend solitary or parallel play. Character, setting, and a series to related activities. No problem but emotional states may be related to activities.
Unfocused Chain	Pretend play cooperative play emerging. Play has a central theme. Character roles shift frequently. Problems arise and attempt to solve problems, but problems are abandoned and shift frequently. Emotional states are present.

Story Grammar and Play

Story Grammar Stage	Play Behavior
Focused Chain	Pretend play with a central theme, characters and initiated event (problem). Random attempts to address the problem. Statement of causality and why solutions don't work. Emotional states are present.
True Narrative	Pretend Cooperative Play. Roles are assigned. Events happen, problems arise and need to be solved. Attempts to solve the problems occur, new problems arise, characters share and comprehend emotional states, cause of the problem, disagree. Children use a variety of pragmatic functions: comment, request and provide information and clarification, protesting.



Clinical Strategies to Support Play and Literacy

- Story Creation
- Multiple Levels of Representation:
 - Photographs of Child in Play, Labeled and Created as a Book
 - Photographs of Child Engaged in Activities, Labeled and Created as a Book



Strategies (continued)

- Story Retelling
- Story Reenactment: Read a book and act out a scene
- Photograph or tape reenactment to talk about



Strategies (continued)

- Discourse
- Conversation regarding photos from story creation/retelling tasks
- Create a story board based on story grammar elements using picture or object props. Participants make decisions about story development. Take the reenactment. Discuss specific content (focus on emotional response, problem id, and solving).



Strategies (continued)

- Shared book reading
- Target a particular executive function and emphasize that during the reading, retelling, and recreation of the story.



Points to remember

Sequencing tasks do not support narrative development but expository text.

Want to emphasize the emotional reaction of characters for narrative development.

Prime students with pictures, objects, discussion regarding the feature of story grammar to “look and listen” for during the reading or other activity.

Match the play activity to receptive/expressive language ability.

Match selected books to the child’s play, receptive, expressive language ability.

Resources

- Applebee, A.N. (1978). The Child's Concept of story. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ferretti, F., Adornetti, I., Chiera, A., Nicchiarelli, S., Valeri, G., Magni, R., Vicari, S., & Marini, A. (2018). Time and Narrative: An Investigation of Storytelling Abilities in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Frontiers in psychology*, 9, 944. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00944>
- Read it Again, Shared Book Reading, Early Literacy, Laura Justice et al.
 - <https://crane.osu.edu/our-work/read-it-again/>
 - <https://www.amazon.com/Shared-Storybook-Reading-Building-Childrens/dp/1557668000>
 - <https://www.amazon.com/Emergent-Literacy-Lessons-Success-Early/dp/1597563013>



Resources (continued)

- SEEL, & Language Intervention in the Classroom, Barbara Culatta et al.
 - https://education.byu.edu/seel/origins_of_seel
 - <https://www.pluralpublishing.com/publications/systematic-and-engaging-early-literacy-instruction-and-intervention>
 - https://books.google.com/books/about/Language_Intervention_in_the_Classroom.html?id=JCSfAAAAMAAJ
- Pixar clips
- Pictello App
- Storybird App
- Best Story Development Apps:
 - <https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/best-apps-for-creating-books-and-storybooks>



Thank You!!!

- Let's Play,
- Building Social Communication
- Literacy with Our Clients

